

Eternity Daily Bible Study

Romans 9-16 The Implications of Salvation

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE AIBI

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Verses: Romans 12:1,2

Topic: Personal Sanctification

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A blessed and joyful New Year to all Eternity-DBS readers!

Romans 12:1-2 MKJV *I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service. (2) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, in order to prove by you what is that good and pleasing and perfect will of God.*

Having journeyed through the long theological excursus of Romans 9-11 we now get back into practical Christian living and will stay there until the end of Romans. These two verses we will examine today are among the most preached on verses in Scripture and shine a clear and concise light on what is involved in personal sanctification (or holiness).

Paul starts with our bodies, and according to him they are not evil, but are redeemable, even acceptable on God's altar and can become "holy, pleasing to God" and part of our logical and reasonable service (Gk: logiken latreian) to our Creator. In 1 Corinthians 6 Paul says:

1 Corinthians 6:13 MKJV (13) *Meats for the belly and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them. But the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body.*

Notice that the body is "for the Lord" and the Lord is "for the body". Our body is meant to be dedicated to God, and God means to indwell our bodies and sanctify them! How is God "for the body"? He loves it, indwells it, heals it, uses it for ministry and will raise it from the dead at the Last Trump! God has a big, huge plan for your body so you had better like it and had better dedicate it to Him in praise and worship and obedience.

How then do we become a "living sacrifice". Sacrifice has two meanings in English but only one in Greek and Hebrew – which confuses things a bit. In Greek and Hebrew it means something offered on an altar, an act of worship, it can be grain, corn, a dove, a sheep, a bullock, a goat – and was worked out so that even the poorest person could afford it. Sacrifice in this sense means sacred offering (sacra – sacred). Later on the meaning of painful renunciation was added with the association of the slain sheep and perhaps Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. However in the Bible while sacrifices were supposed to cost something they were never supposed to be burdensome – so poor people were allowed to sacrifice a pigeon that cost less than a days wage (Leviticus 5:7, 12:8, 14:22, Matthew 10:29). The phrase used means "within reach of their hand" or "what they can easily afford". So the notion of "sacrificial giving" as only being good "when it hurts" is not a thoroughly biblical concept.

So the basic idea of the sacrifice is that it is simply something completely given over to God. Your body should be completely given over to God but you may not have to live in a bark hut in the Amazon jungle to be truly consecrated! You simply have to be Christ's completely, right where you are.

Consecrating the body means consecrating what your hands do, where your feet take you, what your tongue says, what your eyes see and ears hear and how your body interacts with others - including of course your sexual and moral life.

But the body tends to follow the mind and its aspirations so Paul asks us to have renewed minds which are not squeezed into the world's mold. We are not to be conformed to lust, materialism, envy and selfish ambition. We are not to let our minds and thoughts dwell on pornography or violence or on crude and vulgar things.

The last week has seen a number of counseling incidents with "wrong financial thinking" as the main theme - gambling, risky stock market speculation, financial addictions, a woman leaving her godly husband over financial concerns and so on and so forth. The mind went after money, mind was conformed to this world - and the life catastrophically followed:

1 Timothy 6:9-10 MKJV *But they who will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which plunge men into destruction and perdition. (10) For the love of money is a root of all evils, of which some having lusted after, they were seduced from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

The mind was divided into multiple parts by the Greek philosophers but two parts concern us - the phronema or "framework" of the mind (the worldview) and the nous or thoughts of the mind that fill the mental framework. As Christians we have the "mind of Christ" that is the phronema or mental framework and worldview of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). However we have to plug the right thoughts (nous) into the Christian mental framework. If we put the right thoughts into our minds then the mental framework is made stronger and more useful, however if we insist on pushing ugly, ungodly, misshapen thoughts into our minds our mental framework is twisted, distorted and weakened. Our thoughts need to be renewed, made clean and redeemed and as we do this we will discover the "good, acceptable and perfect will of God".

So how do we renew our minds? Keep the garbage out, and put the good stuff in.

Keeping trash out: Don't view porn, don't listen to violent rap music, don't daydream about violent or sexual scenarios, don't read rubbish or enjoy tabloid gossip, avoid materialistic people and consuming too much advertising, avoid accepting wrong lifestyles as normal, don't indulge "Days Of Our Lives" fantasy existences, and don't let superstition, paranoia, fear, skepticism, unbelief and irrationality fill your mind!

Putting the good stuff in: Do study the Scriptures, get knowledge and wisdom wherever it can be found, read classic Christian authors and missionary biographies, listen to uplifting and Christian music, think logically and clearly, associate with people who are positively fully of faith and hope, go to lectures at a good bible college near you, listen to teaching on your CD player, think about world issues in a Christian context, cultivate boldness,

and affirm your sexuality without caving in to it.

AS you do this your mind will straighten up and you will begin to clearly understand spiritual things and to see God's will for your life and His power to help you live it.

Blessings,

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